

REMARKS

Enclosed herewith is a Substitute Specification in which the specification as filed has been amended in various places to correct typographical and grammatical errors.

In support of the above, enclosed herewith is a copy of the specification as filed marked up with the above changes.

The undersigned attorney asserts that no new matter has been incorporated into the Substitute Specification.

The claims have been amended to more clearly define the invention as disclosed in the written description. In particular, claims 1-3 have been cancelled, while claims 4 and 8-10 have each been made proper independent claims. In addition, the claims have been amended for clarity.

Applicants believe that the above changes answer the Examiner's objections to the specification and claims, and respectfully request withdrawal thereof.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over International Patent Application No. WO 95/06309 to Fischer et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,970,159 to McIntosh.

In view of the cancellation of claims 1-3, Applicants believe that this rejection has been overcome.

The Examiner has further rejected claims 4-10 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fischer et al. in view of

McIntosh, and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. US 2003/0105637 to Rodriguez et al.


Applicants believe that the Rodriguez et al. patent publication is an improper reference in that both the publication date (June 5, 2003) and the filing date (December 3, 2001) fall after the filing date of the subject application, to wit, July 24, 2001.

Therefore, this rejection must fall.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that the subject invention, as claimed, is not rendered obvious by the prior art, and as such, is patentable thereover.

Applicants believe that this application, containing claims 4-10, is now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

by 
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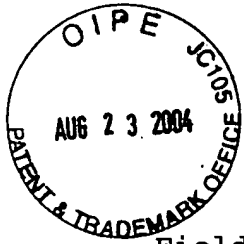
On August 19, 2004
By Burnett James

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PHTW 000005



SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING AN APPARATUS WITH SPEECH COMMANDS

FIELD-BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field Of The Invention

[0001] The invention relates to a system ~~of including~~ an apparatus and a remote control for controlling ~~said the~~ apparatus, 5 the system further including a speech processor for processing speech commands, and the remote control comprising a microphone for enabling a user of ~~said the~~ remote control to input ~~said the~~ speech commands. The invention further relates to a remote control and an apparatus for use in the above system. The invention further 10 relates to a method of controlling an apparatus, comprising a step of processing speech commands for controlling said apparatus.

~~BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION~~ Description Of The Related Art

[0002] Recent developments in speech recognition techniques have 15 enabled users of electronic systems to control ~~said these~~ systems by ~~means of~~ spoken commands. Often, such systems are used in a multi-user setting, e.g., a TV system is used by different members of a household. One of the problems with such systems is that two or more users may address the system at the same time. Since the 20 users can utter the commands at any time and location, it is very difficult to resolve the input conflict. Even if the speakers utter their commands at different times, contradictory commands from different users still cause a problem. Obviously, discrimination of

speech input is a serious concern for voice control with multiple users.

[0003] ~~US-A~~ U.S. Patent 5,777,571 discloses a solution to this problem. Users are registered as authorized users, and their speech commands are distinguished from speech commands from other users by means of voice identification techniques. A problem ~~of~~ with this solution is that voice identification is an expensive and still unreliable technique, and new or occasional users need to be introduced to the system for authorization. Such an introduction often involves a lengthy training phase. Furthermore, this solution cannot resolve the problem that many speakers speak at the same time.

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~~OBJECT AND~~ SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] It is an object of the invention to provide an improved system and method of the type defined in the opening paragraph. To that end, the ~~invention provides a system wherein the system also~~ comprises a further microphone for enabling further users of the system to input speech commands. The system according to the invention thus provides (at least) two microphones for controlling the apparatus. One of ~~said remote control~~ the microphones is located on the remote control and is arranged to pick up speech commands uttered by the user of the remote control. The other microphone is

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located elsewhere, e.g., on the apparatus or at a central place in the room, and is arranged to pick up speech commands uttered by other users of the system ~~which~~ who are not currently operating the remote control. In this way, it is achieved that the system can distinguish speech commands from the user operating the remote control, on the one hand, and other users, on the other hand. This guarantees that the speech commands uttered by the user who is operating the remote control are optimally recognized, since the microphone is located relatively close to the user and can have suitable characteristics to pick-up sounds from the appropriate direction only. When multiple users are speaking simultaneously, the system may give priority to signals received from the microphone on the remote control, so that at least commands uttered by the user of the remote control will be recognized and processed.

15 [0005] An embodiment of the system according to the invention is characterized ~~by said~~ in that the further microphone ~~being~~ is an omnidirectional microphone. In this way, it is achieved that the positions of the other users in the room ~~is~~ are not critical. By contrast, the microphone on the remote control is preferably unidirectional and, when held in a normal manner, oriented so as to ~~aim at its~~ be aimed at the user's mouth ~~when held in a normal manner.~~

25 [0006] An embodiment of the system according to the invention is characterized ~~by said~~ in that the system ~~comprising~~ comprises input designation means for enabling the user to operably selectively

~~designating designate said the~~ microphone and/or ~~said the~~ further microphone as a signal source to ~~said the~~ speech processor. The system thus enables the speech commands obtained from the microphone and the further microphone to be selectively transmitted to the speech processor. For example, the speech processor may be controlled to process speech input from the microphone on the remote control only. Alternatively, the speech processor may be controlled to process speech input from the further microphone only, or from both the further microphone and the microphone on the remote control. Finally, the speech processor may be decoupled from both microphones, thus disabling the speech command facility. Preferably, the input designation means can be controlled via the remote control. For example, the remote control may comprise a button, ~~which enables~~ enabling the user to switch between three different designations, e.g., accept no speech processing at all, accept speech commands from the microphone on the remote control only, and accept speech commands from the further microphone only. Alternatively, speech commands obtained from the further microphone may be accepted by default, while pressing a button on the remote control causes the microphone on the remote control to be temporarily designated as the input source of the speech processor.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] These and other aspects of the invention are apparent from and will be elucidated, by way of a non-limitative example,

with reference to the embodiment(s) described hereinafter. In the drawings:

[0008] Figure 1 shows a television receiver and a remote control as in an embodiment of a system according to the invention; and

5 [0009] Figure 2 shows a ~~diagram~~ block schematic diagram of a television receiver as in an embodiment of an apparatus according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

10 [0010] Figure 1 shows a television receiver 101 and a remote control 102 as an embodiment of a system according to the invention. The remote control 102 comprises an infrared (IR) transmitter 103, a microphone 104 and control elements including, inter alia, a button 105. The television receiver 101 comprises an

15 IR receiver 106 and a further microphone 107. The television receiver can be operated by ~~means of~~ the remote control 102. For that purpose, the remote control 102 has a plurality of keys for controlling various functions of the television receiver 101. For example, the remote control 102 may have numerical keys, zap keys,

20 etc., which are well known in the art. Additionally, a user of the remote control 102 can enter speech commands via the microphone 104, which are then transmitted to the IR receiver 106 of the television receiver 101 and converted to corresponding control

25 commands by a speech processor, described hereinafter. The further microphone 107 is an omnidirectional microphone, which picks up

speech signals from any direction, thus enabling other users ~~which,~~
who are not currently holding the remote control 102, to control
the television receiver 101 by ~~means of~~ voice commands. The button
105 controls input designation means, described hereinafter, for
5 designating the microphone 104 and/or the further microphone 107 as
a signal source for the speech processor.

[0011] Figure 2 shows diagram of a television receiver as an
embodiment of an apparatus according to the invention. For
consistency and ease of understanding, the same reference numerals
10 as in ~~Fig. 1~~ Figure 1 are used for items having functions similar to
those presented in Figure 1. TV signals are received ~~from the~~
ether over the air by an antenna 201 or, alternatively, from a cable
network. One of the TV signals is selected by a tuner 202, decoded
and split into an audio signal, a video signal and a data signal.
15 The audio signal is further processed by an audio processor 203 and
a loudspeaker 204. The video signal is further processed by a video
processor 205 and presented on a screen 206. The data signal is
~~transmitted~~ supplied to a central processing unit (hereinafter
"CPU") 208, which comprises one or more microprocessors capable of
20 executing program instructions. These program instructions comprise
parts of software modules including, inter alia, a command
interpreter 209, and a speech processor 211. The CPU 208 is capable
of controlling functions of the ~~TV set~~ television receiver, as well
as ~~and~~ transmitting data to the video processor 205 to be presented
25 on the screen 206. The command interpreter 209 receives user

commands from the IR receiver 106, which, in turn, receives IR signals from the remote control 102, and ~~transmits~~ supplies them to the CPU 208 to be processed. For example, when the user enters a channel number, the CPU 208 controls the tuner 202 to select the corresponding channel, and sends data to the video processor 205 to ~~present feedback~~ be displayed on the screen 206, e.g., ~~in that the~~ preset number, the channel name and the program category are displayed for a few seconds. When the user issues a zap-command, e.g., by pressing either of the up/down keys ~~of~~ on the remote control, the ~~same feedback is presented~~ similar data is displayed, and the tuner 202 is controlled to select a channel which follows or precedes the current channel.

[0012] The CPU 208 is further capable of controlling a switch 215 which constitutes input designation means for the speech processor 211. The switch 215 can adopt three states. A first state of the switch 215 designates the microphone 104 of the remote control 102 as the signal source for the speech processor 211. Speech signals from the microphone 104 are converted into IR signals, received by the IR receiver 106 and ~~transmitted~~ supplied to the switch 215. In the first state of the switch 215, the speech signals thus obtained from the microphone 104 are input to the speech processor 211 and converted into control commands which are then ~~transmitted~~ supplied to the command interpreter 209.

[0013] A second state of switch 215 designates the microphone 107 as the signal source for the speech processor 211. The

microphone 107 is a part of the television receiver 101, and signals obtained from the microphone 107 are ~~transmitted~~ supplied directly to a second contact of the switch 215.

[0014] A third state of switch 215 designates neither the

5 microphone 104 nor the microphone 107 as the signal source for the speech processor 211, thus disabling speech input completely.

[0015] The switch 215 is controlled by the CPU 208 in response to control signals received from the IR receiver 106, ~~which these~~ control signals ~~are being~~, in turn, generated in response to the

10 user of the remote control 102 operating the button 105. After system initialization, the switch 215 ~~adopts~~ assumes the first state as described above and depicted in Fig. ~~ure~~ ure 2. If the user presses the button 105, the switch 215 ~~adopts~~ assumes the second state, thus designating the microphone 107 as the signal source to
15 the speech processor 211 and disabling the microphone 104. If the user presses the button 105 a second time, the switch 215 ~~adopts~~ assumes the third state, thus designating neither the microphone 104 nor the microphone 107. Pressing the button 105 again ~~restores~~ returns the switch 215 to the first state.

20 [0016] In an alternative embodiment, the switch 215 can ~~adopt~~ assume a fourth state, wherein signals from both microphones are accepted. However, if signals are received from both microphones simultaneously, signals received from the microphone 107 are disregarded in favor of the signals received from the microphone
25 104.

[0017] In summary, the invention relates to a system comprising a speech processor for controlling an apparatus (101) with speech commands. The system, according to the invention, includes a remote control (102) having a microphone (104) for the input speech commands. The system also includes a further microphone (107) for enabling other users of the system to also issue speech commands ~~too~~. The system may have input designation means (105) for enabling the user to operably designating said selectively designate the microphone (104) and/or ~~said the~~ further microphone (~~170~~107) as a signal source to the speech processor.

[0018] Although the invention has been described with reference to particular illustrative embodiments, variants and modifications are possible within the scope of the inventive concept. Thus, for example, the speech commands may be transmitted from the remote control by ~~means of a~~ radio frequency (RF) signals instead of IR signals. Furthermore, instead of, or in addition to, being included in the controlled apparatus, a speech processor may be included in the remote control. The input designation means may be controlled by ~~means of a~~ control element on the remote control or on the controlled apparatus. The control element may be a single-state toggle button as described above, or any other appropriate control element, such as a 'radio button' for each state, or a multi-position switch, each position of which ~~corresponds~~ corresponding to a particular state. The input designation means could be a switch as described hereinbefore, or a more sophisticated switching

circuit under control of the speech processor itself. This would enable the input designation means to be controlled by ~~means of~~ dedicated speech commands irrespective of the currently selected state. The speech processor would then first try to detect such
5 dedicated speech commands irrespective of whether it is allowed to accept speech commands from the respective microphone, and subsequently adjust the input designation in accordance with the dedicated speech commands. Preferably, only a user of the remote control would be allowed to control the input designation means in
10 such manner.

[0019] More than two microphones may be used, which may be located at various positions within the system, e.g., on the apparatus and the remote control as already described, or in the vicinity of the controlled apparatus. The system may also comprise
15 multiple remote controls, each comprising a microphone. Preferably, one of the remote controls serves as a master control and is the only remote control capable of controlling the input designation means.

[0020] The use of the verb '~~to~~-comprise' does not exclude the
20 presence of any elements or steps other than those defined in a claim. In the claims, any reference signs placed between parentheses shall not be construed as limiting the claim. The invention can be implemented by means of hardware comprising several distinct elements, and by means of a suitably programmed

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computer. In claims in which several means are defined, several of these means can be embodied by one and the same item of hardware.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

~~The invention relates to a~~ system ~~comprising having~~ a speech processor for controlling an apparatus (101) with speech commands. ~~The system according to the invention,~~ includes a remote control (102) having a microphone (104) for the input speech commands. The system also includes a further microphone (107) for enabling other users of the system to issue speech commands too. The system may have an input designation means ~~designator~~ (105) for enabling the user to ~~operably designating said~~ selectively designate the microphone (104) and/or ~~said the~~ further microphone (~~170~~107) as a the signal source to the speech processor.

Fig. 1

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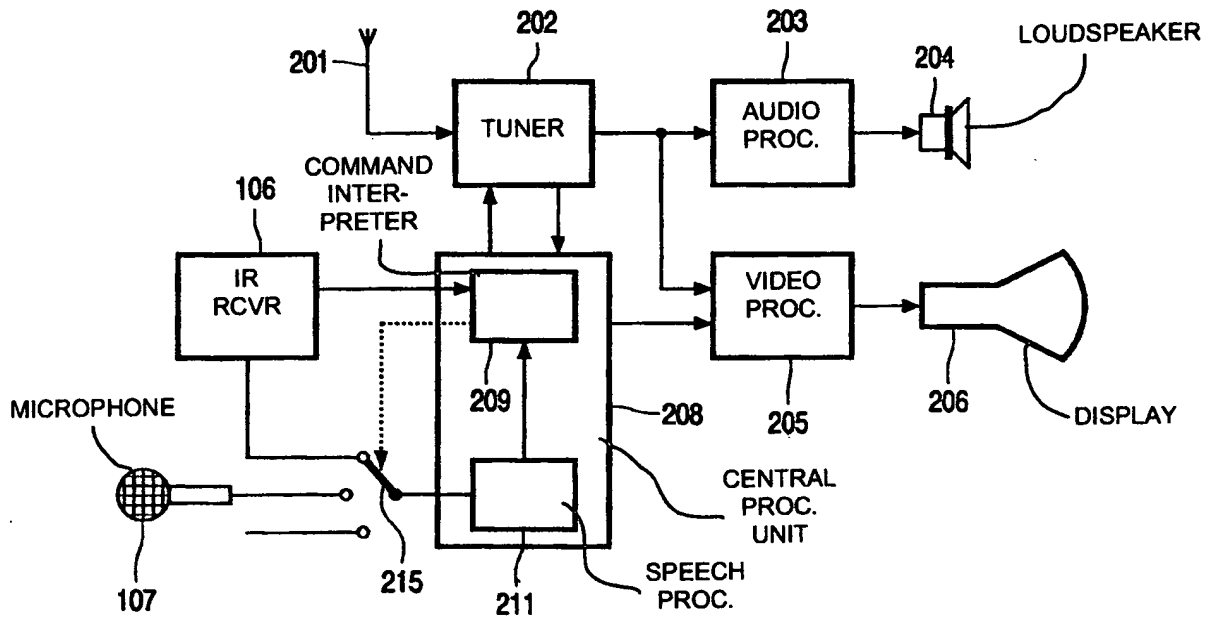


FIG. 2

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